

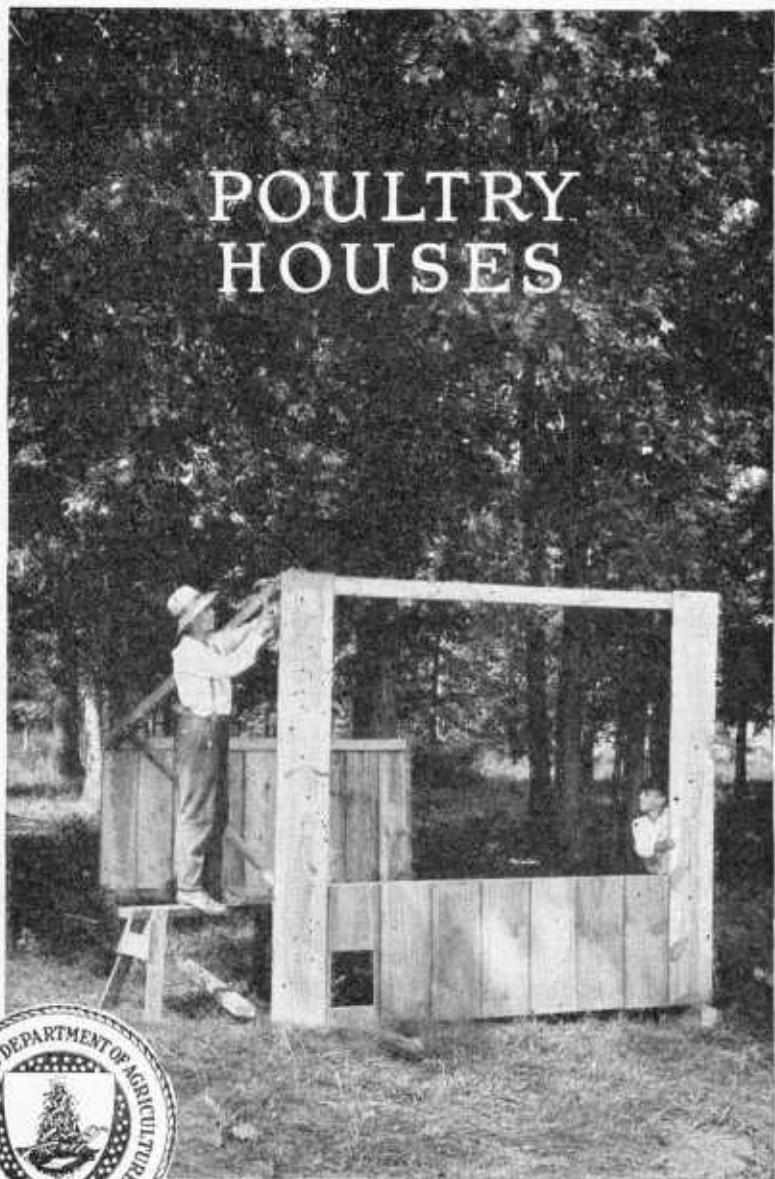
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POULTRY HOUSES



THIS BULLETIN has been written briefly and in simple style for the beginner, and especially for members of the Boys' and Girls' Poultry Clubs. For additional and more complete information the reader should ask for Farmers' Bulletin 574, "Poultry House Construction," which may be obtained in many cases from local club agents or will be sent free of charge on application to the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

POULTRY HOUSES.

ALFRED R. LEE,

Poultryman, Animal Husbandry Division, Bureau of Animal Industry.

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POUULTRY HOUSES or other buildings where fowls are kept should be dry, well ventilated, free from drafts, with plenty of sunshine and room enough to allow the birds to move about with freedom and comfort. These are necessary factors, in fact much more important than the kind or style of building used, if the fowls are to be kept healthy, vigorous, and productive. Poultry houses are built in a variety of shapes and sizes, and often old buildings are

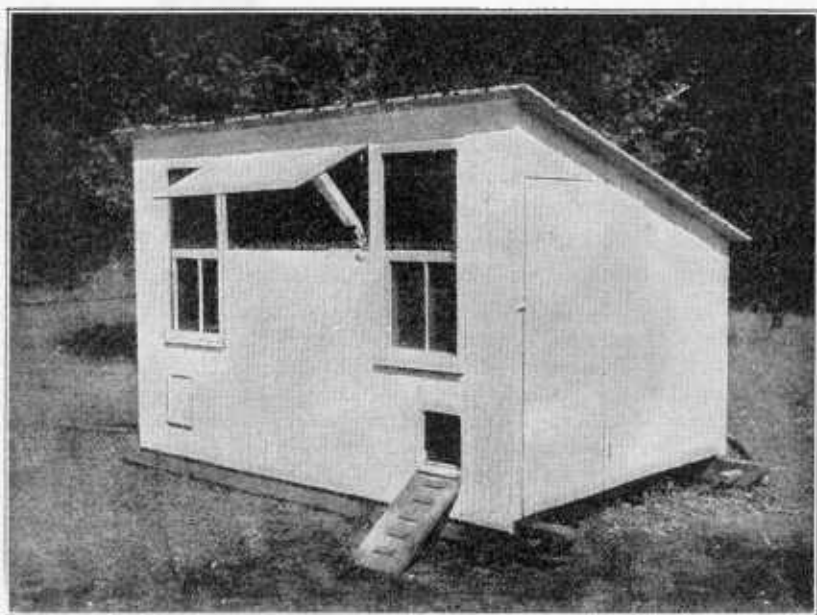


FIG. 1.—House for small flock. It will accommodate any number of fowls up to 25.

built over or remodeled into poultry houses, all giving about the same results, which indicates that no fixed type of building can be recommended as superior to all others if proper ventilation, light, and other essentials here referred to are provided.

LOCATION.

If new houses are to be built they should be located if possible on high or sloping ground and always on dry and well-drained soil.¹ Wet or damp ground means a damp house and a damp house not only means a cold one but invites sickness and diseases. Never build a house in a hollow, as water and cold air settle in low places and should be avoided. Have the house face the south, as it gives more sunlight and for a longer part of the day, especially in winter, when sunlight is necessary for the comfort of the birds. It also makes the house warmer, drier, and more cheerful and adds to the productiveness of the flock.

FLOOR SPACE.

The poultry house should be convenient, substantial, and inexpensive. Its size or dimensions depend largely upon where you live and the number of fowls you wish to keep. On a farm or where the birds can be out of doors nearly every day in the year, about 2½ square feet of floor space per bird in flocks of 20 is enough, but in a village or city or in a climate where there is a good deal of snow, making it necessary to confine the birds closely, 4 or 5 square feet per bird should be allowed.

HOUSE FOR SMALL FLOCK.

The house shown in figure 1 is a very satisfactory one for the average boy or girl who wishes to keep only a small flock, as it may be used for breeding birds or for hens kept only for egg production. It is 10 feet long, 7 feet wide, 6 feet 2 inches high in front and 4 feet high in back, and will accommodate any number of birds up to 25. The following lumber was used in its construction:

Description of material.	Feet, b. m.
2 pieces 4 by 6, 12 feet long, for sills.....	48
3 pieces 2 by 4, 14 feet long, for joists.....	28
3 pieces 2 by 4, 16 feet long, for rafters.....	32
13 pieces 2 by 4, 12 feet long, for studs and braces.....	104
340 square feet ¾-inch matched flooring for floors and sides.....	340
100 square feet 1-inch sheathing for the roof.....	100

Also 1 roll of roofing paper, 2 windows, wire for windows, hinges, and nails.

Common boards 1 inch thick may be used instead of matched flooring for inclosing the house, but in that case battens should be placed over the cracks. Boards as wide as possible should be used, as the wider the boards the smaller the number of battens required. The use of battens is somewhat cheaper and just as satisfactory, although the house is not quite so attractive.

¹ NOTE.—In some parts of the South "stick-tight fleas" are very troublesome. These fleas breed rapidly in the dry sand or dirt, but will not live or breed in damp places. Therefore, where dirt floors are used the poultry houses are often built in rather low damp places (not wet) in preference to a high, sandy, dry location.

In a climate where the winters are not exceptionally cold it is preferable to cut one large opening in the front of the house instead of 2 windows and the opening between them, as shown in figure 1, and to cover it with wire netting instead of putting in sash and glass. When this is to be done, cut the opening lengthwise of the building 7 feet long, $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide, and 6 inches from the roof. Such an opening provides an abundance of ventilation, fresh air, and sunshine, which are very necessary. If it is too cold, a burlap curtain may be made to put down over the opening at night and on extremely cold days. A hen will stand a good deal of cold air, however, provided the air is dry, and plenty of ventilation helps to keep the air dry in the house.

The house shown in figure 1 was built on runners so it could be moved to fresh ground occasionally, but if desired it may be put on a permanent foundation, and the runners left off.

HOUSE FOR 50 TO 75 HENS.

The boy or girl who wishes to keep a larger number of hens must necessarily provide a larger house. If kept principally for egg production, from 50 to 75 hens may run together with good results, and

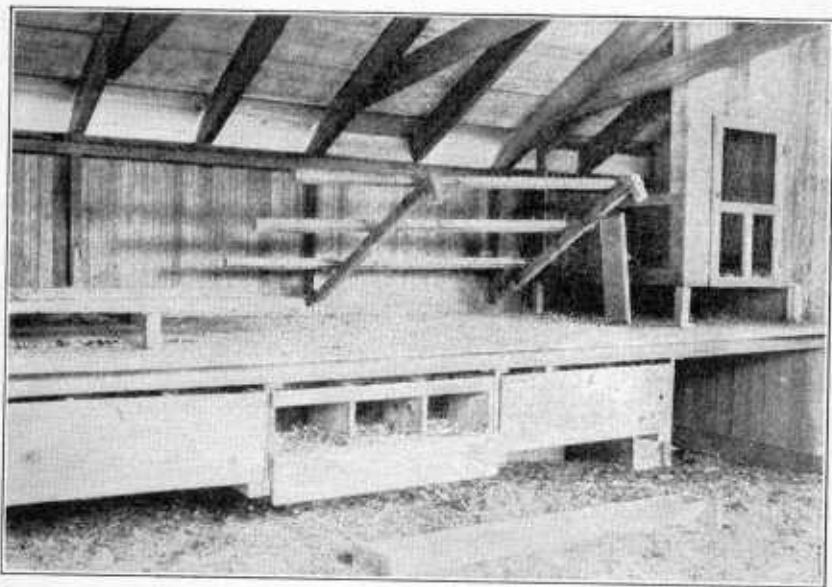


FIG. 2.—A good interior arrangement for a poultry house, showing roosts and dropping boards with nests beneath and a wire coop at the end for confining broody hens. Note ventilators in back of house and the abundance of sunlight, which insures a dry house and healthy fowls.

for this number a house of the same type as figure 1, but 16 feet long, 12 feet wide, 8 feet high in front and 5 feet high in back, is recommended. Such a house gives 192 square feet of floor space

and will accommodate from 50 to 60 hens of the larger breeds, such as Rhode Island Reds or Plymouth Rocks, and from 60 to 75 of the smaller breeds, such as Leghorns, Anconas, and Hamburgs, depending upon how much the birds can be out of doors.

Breeding pens.—The club member who wishes to separate his birds into small breeding pens can divide his house into two or more such pens by constructing wire partitions. The interior arrangement of a good-sized pen with dropping boards, roosts, and nests is shown in figure 2.

REMODELING POULTRY HOUSES.

Many farms have old-style closed-up poultry houses with poor light and ventilation, also old sheds and other buildings of little use for other purposes, that can be remodeled or built over with little difficulty into satisfactory poultry houses. If poultry-club members are offered such an opportunity they should take advantage of it, for a building of that kind usually can be made over for less than one-half the cost of constructing a new one and if the work is well done should give just as good results. Furthermore, the work performed in remodeling the building serves as a good poultry-club demonstration in poultry-house construction. The upper left-hand picture of figure 3 shows an old-style house, lacking in both light and ventilation, and thus unfit for keeping fowls. The upper picture to the right shows an old shed as it appeared before it was built over into a poultry house. The two middle pictures show different views of the same shed remodeled or built over into a modern house. The lower left-hand picture shows the interior of the house, and the lower right-hand picture shows the completed house after a coat of whitewash had been applied.

FLOORS.

Poultry houses may be built with or without floors. In either case they should be dry, as damp floors make damp litter, and dampness is fatal to both fowls and chicks.

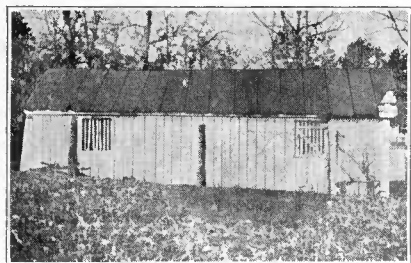
If the house is on dry sandy soil, a dirt floor is usually quite satisfactory, but as a rule it is more damp than board or cement floors. Dirt floors should be scraped down to the clean soil and fresh gravel or sand put in once a year to keep them sanitary. If board floors are used they should be both tight and smooth so as to make them dry and easy to clean. If possible they should be 8 or 10 inches from the ground to allow a circulation of air and to prevent rats from harboring under them.

Cement floors.—Cement floors, especially for large houses, are quite satisfactory, as they keep rats out and also last much longer than board floors. They are also sanitary and easy to clean. A cement

floor should always be kept well covered with litter; otherwise it is cold and uncomfortable for the birds.

INTERIOR ARRANGEMENT.

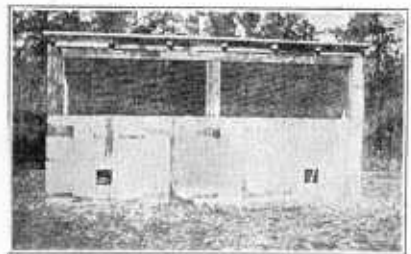
The interior of each poultry house should be simple, convenient, and easy to clean. About the same arrangement can apply to any



Old-style henhouse. No light; no ventilation; poor results.



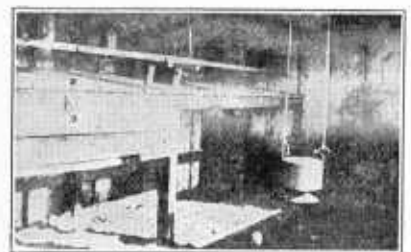
Old shed. Excellent material for poultry house.



Open-front henhouse. Shed boarded up in front; poultry-netting windows.



Side view of house constructed from old shed.



Interior of same house. Good sunlight conditions. 1, Movable roosts; 2, dropping board; 3, nests.



Model henhouse constructed from shed at little cost. Note effect of a coat of whitewash.

FIG. 3.—How old buildings may be converted into good poultry houses.

house, the only difference being that the larger the number of fowls kept the more nests and roosting room required.

Roosts.—Always place the roosts in the back of the house away from the windows or openings to avoid cold. To catch the droppings, build a platform or dropping boards (see fig. 2) about 2 feet or 2 feet 6 inches from the floor (never more than 2 feet 6 inches) and have the roosts about 8 inches above the dropping boards and 15 inches apart.

From 8 to 10 inches of roosting space should be allowed for each hen. The roosts should be built as shown in the picture (fig. 2) and hinged to the back wall, so that they may be raised and both roosts and dropping boards cleaned and sprayed thoroughly. All roosts should be of the same height. Never build one above the other, as every hen will try to get on the highest roost and will fight and try to crowd the others off.

Figure 2 also shows at the end of the roosts a small coop inclosed with wire and having a slat bottom for confining broody hens. Such a coop may or may not be included with the other fixtures, as the club member may wish. If built it should be 3 or 4 inches above the platform, as shown in the picture, because it is easier to keep clean and also allows air to circulate underneath and through the slats, which is important in breaking up sitting hens. If this brood coop is not built, a small slatted coop or crate suspended from the ceiling by a wire or rope, allowing it to swing, makes a good place to break up broody hens.

Nests.—There should be a nest for every 4 hens. Nests should be at least 15 inches square, and may be built singly or in rows and fastened to the side of the building or placed under the dropping boards, as shown in figure 2. If possible, however, nests should be somewhat secluded or darkened, as the hens seek such nests more readily and are also less liable to acquire the habit of eating their eggs. The entrances to the nests in the picture are from the back, the door in front being for convenience in gathering the eggs.

Litter.—The floor of every poultry house, whether of dirt, boards, or cement, should be kept covered with a litter from 3 to 6 inches deep at all times. Oat, wheat, or rye straw makes the best litter, but if it can not be obtained sawdust, chaff, dry leaves, or pine needles may be used. As soon as the litter becomes damp or badly soiled it should be taken out and fresh, dry litter put in its place.

FARMERS' BULLETINS FOR MEMBERS OF BOYS' AND GIRLS' POULTRY CLUBS.

- 574. Poultry House Construction.
- 1105. Care of Mature Fowls.
- 1106. Incubation of Hens' Eggs.
- 1107. Brood Coops and Appliances.
- 1108. Care of Baby Chicks.
- 1109. Preserving Eggs.
- 1110. Lice, Mites, and Cleanliness.
- 1111. Management of Growing Chicks.
- 1112. Culling for Eggs and Market.
- 1114. Common Poultry Diseases.
- 1115. Selection and Preparation of Fowls for Exhibition.
- 1116. The Selection and Care of Poultry Breeding Stock.